

Access to Justice Commission to meet on June 7 in Jackson

June 2, 2016

The Access to Justice Commission will meet at noon June 7 at the Mississippi Bar Center at 643 North State Street in Jackson. Commission members will gather for lunch at 11:30 a.m.

Leadership of the Commission will change, and several longtime members are ending their service.

Hinds County Chancellor Denise Owens, who has led the Commission for a decade, is stepping down as co-chair, but will remain a member. Chancellor Jacqueline Mask of Tupelo, who joined the Commission two years ago, will become co-chair.

Former Co-Chair Joy Lambert Phillips of Gulfport is leaving the Commission after a decade of service. Phillips, the first woman president of the Mississippi Bar, served as Commission co-chair 2006-2010.

Presiding Justice Jess Dickinson and Lela Keys also are leaving the Commission. Justice Dickinson has served on the Commission since its creation in June 2006. He has been a frequent speaker across the country on access to justice issues. Keys, executive director Delta Community Partners in Care in Clarksdale, has been a member of the Commission since August 2009.

Access to Justice Commission Director Tiffany Graves will present a report about recent Commission activities and initiatives.

Representatives of the ACLU of Mississippi will speak at 12:10 p.m. ACLU Staff Attorney Nusrat J. Choudhury and Advocacy Coordinator Blake Feldman are expected to talk about reform efforts directed at the practice of jailing people who are unable to pay criminal fines.

Disability Rights Mississippi will talk to Commission members about the organization's work to protect and advocate for the rights of individuals with disabilities across the state. DRMS Executive Director Ann MacLaine and Managing Attorney Joi Owens are scheduled to speak at 12:30 p.m.

Committees and sub-committees of the Access to Justice Commission will discuss their recent work at 1 p.m. Beau Cole and Beth Orlansky will talk about the work of the Service Delivery System Committee. Michael L. Jones will talk about the Medical-Legal Partnership. Pastor Hosea Hines is scheduled to talk about Faith-Based Initiatives. Chancellor Jacqueline Mask and Jamie Bardwell are expected to talk about public awareness. Justice Dickinson and Dean Wendy Scott of Mississippi College School of Law will talk about resource development.

The Access to Justice Commission was created by the Mississippi Supreme Court in June 2006 to develop a unified strategy to improve poor people's access to the civil courts. The Commission is tasked to investigate the need for civil legal services to the poor in Mississippi, and to evaluate, develop and recommend policies, programs and initiatives which will assist the judiciary in meeting the civil legal services needs of the poor.

For more information, contact Executive Director Tiffany Graves at 601-960-9581 or visit the Access to Justice Commission website at <http://www.msajc.org/>.

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